Appendix E

Guidelines for Trading Partners Using EMS

GUIDELINES FOR TRADING PARTNERS USING EMS

While the following information is provided primarily for those who use scripts to control interaction with EMS, it is also useful for individuals who login and conduct their sessions "manually."

1. Use **pattern matching, not timers,** to control the flow of scripts. Scripts should be able to handle all messages and prompts from EMS, not just the main "retrieve acknowledgment" and "submit a file" paths. See Appendix F for an example of a script that is entirely controlled by simple pattern-matching.

2. If it is absolutely necessary to use a timer when waiting for a message or prompt, then the timer value should not be less than 100 seconds. EMS always sends a response within 100 seconds (worst case) after the last user-interaction (EMS prompt or user response). The timer in the script should function only as a "fail-safe" device in case of unanticipated system behavior.

3. Log off using the "Logoff" menu option on the main menu, instead of simply hanging up. Do not hang up until the "DISCONNECTING FROM EFS" message has been received. This is true for both scripted and human interaction with EMS.

4. When a message is received indicating that EMS is unavailable, don't try again immediately. Wait at least 10 minutes.

5. For TPs that are registered as reporting agents, there are additional prompts to allow a transmission file to be "signed." Since TPs have one ETIN for all form types, and registration types can be added or deleted, scripts should implement responses to the additional prompts if they are displayed, but still operate properly if they are not.

6. Do not login repeatedly when there is no work to do (i.e., no files to submit or acknowledgments to pick up). In most cases, EMS provides a negative acknowledgment within 10 minutes of submission if the file is not accepted for further processing. If EMS has not provided a negative acknowledgment within 35 minutes, the file, except in rare circumstances, has been forwarded to the appropriate tax-return-processing system. For MeF and 94X files, which are forwarded immediately to the tax-return-processing system, acknowledgements are available shortly after that system has processed each file. For files that are batched and "drained" at published times, acknowledgments from the tax-return-processing system will not be available for hours.

7. If a TP has multiple concurrent sessions at the same physical site using the same ETIN, only one session will retrieve acknowledgments. Unless the other sessions are used to submit files, they will not accomplish any useful work.